NOTE: This is a recommendation by the GMI Technical Committee of the NCUTCD. It is being distributed to the National Committee sponsoring organizations for review and is subject to revision. This draft recommendation is not a revision to the MUTCD and does not constitute official standards, guidance, or options. No proposed revision to the MUTCD is effective unless and until approved by FHWA through an Interim Approval or through the Federal rulemaking process.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE: Guide/Motorist Information (GMI)

TOPIC: Changeable Message Signs (CMS)

STATUS/DATE OF ACTION:
TC Drafts: 06/26/2014
TC Approval: 06/27/2014
Transmitted to Sponsors: 00/00/0000
Council Approval: 06/28/2014

ORIGIN OF REQUEST: John Hansen

AFFECTED SECTIONS OF MUTCD: FHWA, 2016 MUTCD Concept Only – Limited Distribution for GMI Review, Section 2L.02, Page 2 of 6, lines 6-12, 29-30, 35-37 and 42-43

SUMMARY: The FHWA Fall 2013 Compilation of Draft Technical Updates/Considerations proposed additional restrictions on Changeable Message Sign (CMS) use. The proposed restrictions affect current programs and practices. GMI recommends that the proposed FHWA restrictions in Section 2BA.02 be deleted until regulatory and programmatic conflicts with existing practices are resolved.

DISCUSSION
The FHWA text modifications that propose additional restrictions on CMS may adversely affect mandated CMS use for ongoing, mandatory participation, federal and state programs such as Amber Alerts, Silver Alerts, National Weather Service alerts or interim Safety Campaign efforts. GMI recommends that the additional restrictions be deleted and that FHWA only add the restrictions to the MUTCD after a complete review of potential regulatory and programmatic conflicts has been completed.
RECOMMENDED MUTCD PROVISIONS/ REVISIONS

Note: FHWA proposed changes to the MUTCD are shown with text additions in underline blue and deleted text is shown in strikethrough red. Proposed changes are shown with additions in underline green and deletions in underline strikethrough red.

Section 2L.02 Section 2BA.02 Applications of Changeable Message Signs

Support:

Changeable messagesignshavealargenumberofapplicationsincluding, but not limited to, the following:

- Incident management and routed diversion
- Warning of adverse weather conditions
- Special event applications associated with traffic control or conditions
- Control at crossing situations
- Lane, ramp, and roadway control
- Priced or other types of managed lanes
- Travel times
- Warningsituations
- Trafficregulations
- Speedcontrol
- K. Destination guidance

Option:

Changeable messagesignsmaybeusedbyStateandlocalhighwayagenciestodisplayshort-term安全性 messages asasupportingelementofabroadersafetycampaign, transportation-related messages, emergency homeland security messages, and America’s Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) alert messages.

Standard:

Other types of “alert” messages that are unrelated to traffic or travel conditions shall not be displayed on CMS. AMBER alerts, when displayed, shall not preempt messages related to traffic or travel conditions. AMBER alert messages shall be kept as brief as possible and display only that information which will direct road users to another source, such as highway advisory radio, for detailed information about the alert. Other information, such as descriptions of persons, vehicles, or license plate numbers, shall not be displayed with an AMBER alert message on a CMS.

Guidance:

State and local highway agencies should develop and establish policy regarding the display of the types of messages provided in Paragraph 2. When changeable messagesigns are used at multiple locations to address a specific situation, the messages displayed should be consistent along the roadway corridor and adjacent corridors, which might necessitate coordination among different operating agencies.

Support:

Examples of safety campaigns supporting messages include “SEATBELTBUCKLED?” and “DON’T RINKANDDRIVE.” Examples of transportation-related messages include “STADIUMEVENTSUNDAY, EXPECT DELAYS SNOONTO4PM” and “OZONE ALERT CORDERED—USETRANSIT.”

Guidance:

When a CMS is used to display a safety or transportation-related message, the message should be simple, brief, legible, and clear. A CMS should not be used to display safety
or transportation-related messages so would adversely affect respect for the sign. “CONGESTION AHEAD” or other overly simplistic or vague messages should not be displayed alone. These messages should be supplemented with a message on the location or distance to the congestion or incident, delay and travel time, alternative route, or other similar messages.

When displayed, safety messages should be simple and direct, emphasizing the applicable regulation or traffic condition information. Slogan type messages and the display of highway statistics should be avoided.

Standard:

When a CMS is used to display a safety, transportation-related, emergency, homeland security, or AMBER alert message, the display shall not be of a type that could be considered similar to advertising displays.

Safety messages shall not be displayed on CMS unless they are part of an active, coordinated safety campaign that uses other media forms as the primary means of outreach and, where regulations apply, includes coordinated enforcement efforts.

Support:

Section 2B.13 contains information regarding the design of changeable messages that are used to display variable speed limits that change based on ambient or operational conditions, or that display the speed at which approaching drivers are traveling.

Section 2H.03 contains information regarding the design of changeable message signs that are used to display variable speeds for traffic signal progression on the Traffic Signal Speed (I-IS) sign.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE VOTE:

For: 19
Opposed: 0
Abstentions: 0